(ख) उपर्युक्त पदों पर नियुक्ति संबंधी क्या मानदंड अपनाए जाते हैं?

विदेश मंत्री (श्री इन्द्र कुमार गुजराल): (क) और (ख) राजदूतों/हाई कमिश्नरों/राज्यपालों की नियुक्ति उनकी उपयुक्तता, उनके अनुभव और श्रेष्ठता के आधार पर की जाती है न कि जाति या समुदाय के आधार पर राज्यपालों की नियुक्ति अथवा उनके वैयक्तिक विवरण का संबंध इस मंत्रालय से नहीं है। जहां तक वृत्तिक राजदूतों/हाई कमिश्नरों का प्रश्न है उनमें से तेरह अनुसूचित जातियों से तथा सात अनुसूचित जनजातियों के हैं।

LITE Activity in Tamil Nadu

1173. DR. D. MASTHAN: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that LTTE is active again on Rameshwaram Coast in Tamil Nadu;

(b) whether Government are aware of the Reports about LTTE smugglers nexus along the southern coastal line of Tamil Nadu; and

(c) the steps Government have taken to contain terrorist activities in the State?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MOHD. MAQBOOL DAR): (a) There is no confirmed information suggestive of LTTE having become active on Rameshwaram Coast.

(b) Yes, Sir. Some incidents of Indian fishermen transporting contraband items for the use of LTTE have come to notice.

(c) The Central and State Govemments are taking coordinated action to prevent any illegal activities by Sri Lankan militants. Considering that Tamil Nadu has a long coastline, elaborate arrangements have been made for preventing possible infiltration. State Govt has intensified security arrangements along the coastline by setting up armed check posts as well as mobile patrols. Apart from these measures, the Palk Bay is kept under continuous surveillance by Navy and Coast Guard.

The Central Government declared the LTTE as an unlawful association on 14.5.1996. This will strengthen the hands of the Central and State Governments in containing the activities of LTTE and eliminate the threat posed to the country by this organisation.

Bomb Blasts in Delhi

1174. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether foreign hand has been identified in the series of bomb blasts on the eve of elections in Kashmir valley, including the massive blasts in (i) Lajpat Nagar Market, New Delhi and (ii) a bus near Jaipur which claimed heavy toll of life;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether America and other countries condemned the perpetrators of the blasts?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MOHD. MAQBOOL DAR): (a) and (b) The interrogation of the arrested persons in the Lajpat Nagar bomb blast case reveals that the man behind the sinister plan to cause bomb blasts in various towns in the country is based in Pakistan. He was provided RDX for the explosions by Pak ISI.

(c) The bomb blast in New Delhi was condemned by the USA. In a letter to the Prime Minister, the Ambassador of Bulgaria condemned the terrorist bomb blasts in Delhi and Rajasthan.

Communication from LTTE Representatives

1175. SHRI SUSHILKUMAR SAMBHAJIRAO SHINDE: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether concerned by Sri Lankan armed forces, the LTTE has stepped up its international public relations exercises with special emphasis on India;

(b) if so, any communication has been received by Government from the LTTE representatives in Sri Lanka for improvement of relations and seeking support of Government of LTTE cause; and

(c) Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL): (a) Government are aware of reports of heightened propaganda exercises by LTTE and its front organisations in different parts of the world in

the wake of its recent military setbacks. However, there is no information indicating a special emphasis on India in these public relation exercises. There have, however, been references of India in LTTE publications which indicate LTTE interest in future policy of Government of India.

(b) In this context, the Government have not received any communication from LTTE representatives in Sri Lanka for improvement of relations or seeking support to the cause of LTTE.

(c) Does not arise.

Repatriation of Indian Children from Pakistan Custody

1176. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a Pakistani social organisation "Edhi' has drawn the attention of Government to the pathetic condition of 38 Indian children, who were rounded up by Pak Security forces for illegal fishing in Pak-waters;

(b) if so, whether "Edhi' has requested the Government to repatriate these children from their custody;

(c) if so, the Government's response thereto; and

(d) the total numbers of other Indians in Pakistan's custody, being illegal entrants?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI IK. GUJRAL): (a) to (c) On 18th May 1996, the Pakistani newspaper "Dawn' carried a report which stated that 34 Indian children were lodged in the Edhi Welfare Centre, Karachi. The report further stated that these children has been arrested by the Pakistani authorities in September 1994.

The matter was immediately taken up with the Government of Pakistan who was requested to provide personal details/ documents of these children. Permission was also sought for officials of the High Commission of India, Islamabad to visit Karachi so as to obtain access to these children to determine their antecedents for taking further necessary action to bring them to India.

Maulana Edhi of the Welfare Centre was also contacted to determine their background and ascertain their welfare. Maulana Edhi informed the High Commission in writing that formal permission of the Government of Pakistan would be required by his organisation for interacting with our Mission regarding these children.

Government of Pakistan has as yet neither provided details nor has it allowed our Mission officials to visit these children. In the present situation we are unable to make any authoritative assessment regarding these children. There have however, been indications that these children are from Gujarat and Daman & Diu and may have been in the fishing boats which were apprehended by Pakistani agencies for allegedly fishing in Pakistani waters.

We are actively pursuing this matter with Pakistan.

(dl According to available information, at present there are 1249 Indian civilian prisoners, fishermen and crew members of cargo vessels in the custody of Pakistan. Pakistan does not provide details regarding Indians in their detention.

Violation of air-space by foreign aircrafts

1177. SHRI SUSHILKUMAR SAMBHAJIRAO SHINDE: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any violation of air-space by foreign aircraft have been noticed during the last three months;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI N.V.N. SOMU): (a) to (c) There have been two incidents in which passenger aircraft belonging to Bangladesh and Kyrgistan violated Indian airspace on 18th May 1996 and 12th June 1996 respectively. In both the cases, the pilot deviated from the approved/planned flight path to avoid bad weather.